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ABSTRACT

Catholic educators want students to do their best academically and become good Catholics. Challenges that make this goal difficult to accomplish include a changing environment within the Catholic school: staffs that were almost entirely composed of priests or religious are now almost entirely lay, and the tension between the school as an educational institution and the school as a faith community has increased. In addition, both public and Catholic schools experience the loose coupling between the work of the principal and the effectiveness of the school. Finally, high schools are more diversified than elementary schools, academically and geographically. A Catholic school principal must provide both academic and religious leadership to have an effective Catholic school. A principal can help to make a school a more effective environment by working to develop its distinctly Catholic culture. The keys to leadership are vision and inspiration. To develop a school culture, the principal must be committed, purposeful, and involved in managing the values of the school; painstaking in the hiring and development of teachers; and adept at building coalitions with competing constituencies to reach desired goals. (MLF)

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THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

A DIFFERENT KIND OF LEADER

A paper presented at the National Catholic Educational Association Convention, St. Louis, Missouri, April 1985

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THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: A DIFFERENT KIND OF LEADER

All of us want our schools to be effective centers of Christian learning. We want our students to leave our schools having done their best academically and having become good solid Catholics. What we desire is not always easy to accomplish. To begin with, I'd like to look briefly at some of the challenges which face us in Catholic schools. Then I plan on touching on some of the ways we have of meeting these challenges, particularly through some of the ideas connected with effective schools. Lastly I want to say a few things about what we as principals can do to enhance the religious environments of our schools.

Changing Environment

First, it is obvious that we are in a changing environment within the Catholic school. Our objectives have changed over the past twenty years. Because the world and the Church have changed, Gospel values must be transmitted in new and more relevant ways. We can no longer be interested simply in providing the basics of religious knowledge and in creating good American citizens. Our schools should produce young people with a true apostolic commitment, who will stand up and work for what they believe in. The challenge confronting Catholic schools, according to Monika Hellwig, to make a direct impact on society through the character, or the culture, of the school (1984).

Another change in our schools is in our faculties. Staffs which were almost entirely composed of priests or religious are now almost entirely lay. It is predicted that by the turn of the century, religious will form only 2% of the staffs of Catholic schools. It's not easy to realize or accept the fact that I, as a religious priest, am a dinosaur destined for extinction, but that is a fairly well established prediction. The recent study of teachers in Catholic high schools by Holland et al. shows that there is some difference between the religious commitment of lay teachers (especially non-Catholics) and the priests, sisters, and brothers whom they have replaced (1985). Our challenge is to ensure that despite the changes in staffs, there is no significant dilution in the missions of our schools.

Loose Coupling

Another challenge facing all schools, Catholic and public, is the belief of parents and outsiders that that there is a direct relationship between the work of the principal and the

effectiveness of the school. In this view of education, the principal makes rules and decides on the best way of carrying them out. Teachers comply quickly and efficiently. There is a logical cause and effect relationship between what the principal does and what is accomplished. (I know that that situation exists in all your schools.) The term that is used to describe this is tight coupling.

But any experienced principal knows that things don't work quite that way in schools. If our wishes, orders, and directives aren't ignored as being irrelevant, they are interpreted in a variety of manners. Teachers and students do things in ways which they think are best for themselves and the school. The wishes of the principal are often waylaid. One college president even stated there is an academic application of Newton's Third Law, that for every administrative action, there is an opposite and equal faculty reaction (Walker 1981).

Now there's no question that a great deal of what goes on in a school is directly related to what the principal does, but the principal is not the only actor in the school. Teachers, parents, and students initiate things to help to make a school more or less effective. The school environment --its location, the physical plant, the atmosphere within the school -- all influence what goes on. There's more to an effective school than a simple principal-teacher interaction.

The task of education is not the type of situation that calls for a tightly coupled system. Recent organizational theory instead suggests that schools resemble loosely coupled organizations in which teachers and students are largely independent of the principal's immediate supervision and control (Weick 1982). Loose coupling means that events are linked in an indirect manner. For example, what the principal wants gets interpreted and watered down by department chairpersons before being passed on to teachers. This cartoon illustrates loose coupling at its extreme. The term "organized anarchy" has even been used with some validity to describe the way schools operate (Cohen & March 1983). Our challenge is to provide a strong sense of unity among our faculties so that everyone works together without loose coupling.

Diversification of the High School

Still another challenge is that high schools are more diversified than elementary schools, academically and geographically. Catholic high schools are concerned not just with providing religious education but also (and perhaps primarily) with initiating teenagers into full participation in the faith community (Reichert 1974). Our high schools don't enjoy

the direct immediate outside religious support that the parish school does. My school, for instance, draws students from 35 different parishes and 61 public, Catholic, and private feeder schools from all over San Diego county and Tijuana, Mexico. Our interaction with any one local parish or grade school is quite limited.

An elementary principal can directly influence the eight or so faculty members all in much the same way. However, as a former physics and math teacher, I find that I am not as knowledgeable or competent in methods of teaching composition, history, or French as I am in math and science even with training in supervision techniques. If my school is large, I might not even see some teachers each day unless I deliberately look for them. As high school administrators, we have to be honest and admit that our direct influence over teachers is ordinarily not as great as that of the elementary school principal (Firestone & Herriott 1982; Greenfield 1982).

The challenge facing us then is to unify staff even though we ordinarily might not have the same amount of direct personal interaction with faculty members that the elementary principal has.

Tension Between Sacred and Secular

There's one other challenge facing the Catholic school principal that I would like to mention. There will always be a tension between the sacred and the secular, between the school as an educational institution and the school as a faith community. (Pearson 1980). Some individuals will see themselves only as administrators or teachers, no different from their public school counterparts. A Spanish or Chemistry teacher might not see any relationship between what they're teaching and the overall religious goals of the school. Others will see the school primarily as a religious community focusing its attention on the needs, gifts, and talents of its members. There will be tensions within the school as a result.

The challenge facing us then it to work with our staffs so that everyone associated with the school, from the math and history teachers to the secretaries and janitors, sees their work as tied in to the teaching apostolate of the Church.

Our Leadership

These challenges force us as Catholic school principals to look at our leadership. We have to be leaders because no one

else in our schools is in a position to lead as well as we are. There have been a lot of studies of effective schools in recent years and all of them show clearly that strong leadership from the principal is necessary to have an effective school (D'Amico 1982; Persell et al, 1982). Taking that knowledge one step further, I believe it's safe to say that a Catholic school principal must provide both academic and religious leadership in order to have an effective Catholic school.

Effective Schools

Research shows that effective schools have a set of 5 to 7 common characteristics including:

High expectations of student achievement
A clear sense of purpose
A safe, orderly learning environment
A sense of community
Strong administrative leadership.

One problem with most of these studies is that the only criterion used to evaluate effectiveness has been academic achievement. There is more to a good school than that. In the famous study of London inner-city high schools, Fifteen Thousand Hours, Rutter et al. showed that the "ethos" or culture of the school was extremely important to make a school effective (1979). All things being equal, schools with positive cultures achieved more than ordinary schools.

Schools with strong positive cultures showed a great deal of agreement between their philosophies and the reality of day-to-day living (Grant 1982; Shared goals 1984). They were primarily interested in developing both moral character and intellectual abilities. The goals of such schools were clearly spelled out to students by the principals and teachers. The culture of these schools was reflected by what people did as well as by what they said.

Culture

That leads me into an area in which I'm very strongly interested, namely culture. Culture is a very general term used originally by anthropologists to describe the whole complex of ideas connected with a society. Culture is not an easy term to define. It's like time as described by St. Augustine. Intuitively he knew what time was, but if you asked him for a definition, he couldn't give one. One definition of culture

which has been given is that it is the system of publicly and collectively accepted meanings, beliefs, values, and assumptions that an organization uses to guide its actions and interpret its surroundings (Firestone and Wilson 1984).

A simple way to put it is that culture or climate is the meaning which people commonly give to an organization or group. (Pettigrew, 1979). It is the thing which distinguishes one school from another, the atmosphere which permeates the place. Culture is the way we do things; the pattern of human thought and behavior.

In recent years, there has been an growing interest in cultures of corporations, as shown by the popularity of books such as In Search of Excellence (Peters and Waterman 1982), The Change Masters by Rosabeth Kanter (1983) and Corporate Culture (1982) by Deal and Kennedy. Recent "how-to" books, such as Creating Excellence (1984) by Hickman and Silva and American Spirit (1984) by Lawrence Miller have suggested methods of strengthening the culture of companies. We can apply the findings of such studies to help us develop better schools.

School Culture

The things which make up a school culture include all the elements which are shared by people in the school-- values, symbols, beliefs, and meanings.The "stuff" of culture include a school's traditions and customs, its historical accounts, and the habits, norms, and expectations of people within it (Sergiovanni 1984). The older a school is, the more likely it is to have a strong culture with legends about people who have become institutions--Father Danaher or Sister Mary Eulalia, and to have sagas about the past.

If a new teacher or student is to become an integral part of the school,he or she must assimilate its culture. It's like the two ants on a golf course who were narrowly missed by the swings of a duffer trying to hit his golfball. Finally one ant said to the other, "If we're going to survive, we'd better get on the ball." It's only by getting on the ball and absorbing the culture, that a teacher or student really becomes a part of a school.

In a school with a strong culture, faculty and students are more likely to act in a particular way because "that's the way things are done around here." Teachers will express certain values in their methods of teaching and of dealing with students because they know this is what is expected. For instance, they become committed to principles of peace and justice because they see that the school itself reflects a sense of peace and

justice. The culture of a school has been compared to a tide which raises the success and standards of behavior of all students and faculty (Grant 1981).

Theodore Sizer (1984) suggests that schools can't directly teach virtues like tolerance and generosity. Instead these are taught largely by example or by what he calls "the surround," the influence of the institution itself living out those values. It's what O'Neill was referring to when he talked about the "permeation of intentionality" which should exist in a Catholic school (1979). To go back to one of the challenges I mentioned earlier, effective schools don't have the problem of loose coupling simply because they aren't loosely coupled. Goals and objectives of the school and the instructional program are clearly known by teachers, students, and administrators and are living entities (Levine 1984).

According to one recent article, the cultural norms that affect school improvement are the following:

1. Collegiality of the professional staff.
2. An openness to experimentation.
3. High expectations of the faculty.
4. Trust and confidence in the professional staff.
5. Tangible supports for teachers.
6. Use of knowledge in various areas, such as general teaching skills, cognitive and affective development of adolescents, and each of the academic disciplines.
7. Caring, celebration, and humor.
8. Appreciation and recognition.
9. Involvement in decision making.
10. Protection of what's important.
11. Traditions.
12. Honest, open communication (Saphier and King, 1985).

Catholic School Culture

Several studies have indicated that effective Catholic schools have certain common cultural elements. Some of these are

similar to those I just mentioned. Coleman indicated Catholic schools had strong academics, high expectations, orderliness, and commitment (1981). Erickson's study of Catholic schools in British Columbia (1979) and last year's NCEA study of effective Catholic high schools (Bryk et al 1984) showed that there is a strong sense of community and mutual commitment among parents, students and teachers. People see the school as an extension of the Church. There is consensus on beliefs and practices, such as social justice, racial harmony, and human relations. Effective Catholic high schools are value-oriented, grounded in a set of beliefs about the worth of each individual. They have a world view which goes beyond self interest. The thing which binds together the culture of the Catholic school and makes it work is an orientation toward personal goodness.

Various other writers have indicated a number of other distinctive characteristics of Catholic schools: an academic environment which is perceived as joyful, disciplined and forgiving; the existence of a faith community based on friendship; a challenge to metanoia (change); appreciation of the Eucharist as the center of worship; Christian service to the community; and most importantly, a committed staff which provides moral models to students (Amendolara 1984; Pennock 1980; Reck 1979).

The Study of Leadership

To state my main premise, a principal can help to make a school a more effective religious environment by working to develop its distinctly Catholic culture. To do that, a principal must be a leader. Years ago, people thought that leaders were born, not made. They had certain characteristics from childhood which eventually made them leaders. We all remember the stories about George Washington and the cherry tree or Abe Lincoln studying by the fireplace. We looked up to them because of the virtues and traits we perceived in them. We saw them as Great Men.

The social scientists tried to categorize the traits which people saw in recognized leaders. They came to realize that the backgrounds and behaviors of great leaders were so idiosyncratic and individualistic that there was no universal set of traits by which you could recognize a potential leader. Some like Lincoln became leaders to overcome childhood deprivation; others like Franklin Roosevelt capitalized on childhood opportunities. The list of traits became enormous.

As Alvin Toffler has indicated, the problem with looking at the traits of recognized great leaders is that the problems which faced them were quite different from those facing us (1981). None

of us is going to lead a nation or to forge national polcies governing racial equality. We cannot simply try to duplicate these traits in our lives because our situations are different from those which confronted Napoleon or Lincoln.

In this vein of looking at traits, there is an extensive list of characteristics of effective principals (Phi Delta Kappa 1984). Some of the traits suggested are in direct opposition to each other. For instance, one says that "the principal must be exceptionally clear on short- and long-term goals," or in other words, be highly directive. That doesn't match well with another statement that "the principal must encourage teachers to evaluate their own professional competencies and set goals for their own professional growth," or be very non-directive. I especially like the last couple, "to leap over tall buildings at a single bound", "to walk on water", and "to be stronger than a locomotive." The skills and traits needed to be an effective principal almost sound like a description of Wonder Woman or Superman. It's like what someone said about Noah -- if he had really been wise, he would have swatted those two flies.

After looking at traits or characteristics, the next step in the study of leadership was to say that if leaders aren't born, then they can be made. By providing proper training, anyone can be made into a leader. Various ways were suggested for becoming or exercising leadership -- Fiedler with his contingency model, Hersey and Blanshard with situational leadership, and House and Mitchell's Path-Goal theory of leadership. These models in general were based on the assumption that you change your leadership style to match the situation. A leader must assess the situation and be flexible enough to change to order to meet a changed environment. The shortcoming of these models is that they are business oriented and concentrate on organizational goals, not on the vision of the leader or even on common goals.

The Spark of Leadership

My own personal feeling is that the spark of leadership lies somewhere in between the Great Leader and the Made Leader. Leaders are not born; but not everyone can be made into a leader. Leadership is the ability and the activity of influencing people and of shaping their beliefs (Shawchuck 1981). Strong leadership is the capacity to mobilize available resources to arouse, engage, or satisfy the motives of followers (Burns 1978, Persell 1982). Not everyone can do that. Some people don't have a vision to begin with, while others can't articulate their vision clearly enough to excite people to follow them. Some never have the opportunity to exercise leadership, and still others don't realize that they have available inner or external resources at their command. Some simply don't have the gift of

leadership which Paul talks about in Romans, 1 Corinthians, and Ephesians.

Leadership Position

Presumably a person is a leader if he or she is in a job which is recognized as a leadership position, such as president or principal. Sometimes that's true and such individuals are leaders; sometimes they're not. Franklin Roosevelt was definitely a leader of our country, but was Warren G. Harding? Lee Iacocca is a nationally recognized leader in the auto industry, but what about the head of General Motors, whoever he is? Is he a leader? In the same vein, is every principal an educational leader?

I've known a few principals who were not leaders. Several were autocrats who ruled schools with iron fists, making every major decision singlehandedly, stifling any initiative on the part of teachers. Another was a visionary who tried to make his school a hotbed of educational reform; he failed to convince parents and teachers of the usefulness or purpose of his vision and thus was viewed as a failure. Still another was a quiet man who did wonders in financially putting a school back on its feet, but couldn't effectively communicate his vision to parents or teachers.

No, not every principal has all of the charisms of an effective leader. I certainly don't claim to have many of these gifts myself. But being in the leadership position of principal does give us a tremendous advantage; it gives us additional resources to work with and clout to help us accomplish our goals. It doesn't, however, guarantee that we are going to be leaders.

Leadership vs. Management

From my perspective, much of what has been described in the literature as educational leadership really should be classified as management skills. There is much confusion between leadership and management. For instance, an article in the February issue of Momentum was titled "The principal must be a masterful manager," but really the article dealt with qualities which I would classify as leadership skills (Hauden 1985).

What's the difference between leadership and management? One answer is that you lead people; you manage things. Chester Finn of Vanderbilt University says that there is a single crucial distinction between the ordinary principal and the effective

principal (or between the manager and the leader). That distinction is in the way the principal views his or her position. A manager sees it only as maintaining the operation; a leader views it as a series of well-formulated goals for improvement which lead to plans and activities and evaluations and assessments and reflections and then to more goals, more plans, and more actions (Finn 1983). Many people in leadership positions in schools are satisfied to have a tidy schedule, orderly classrooms, parents who are satisfied with the school, a successful retreat program, or a winning football team. They are managers.

Others bring out the best in a group by inspiring cooperation within a group of winners. A leader energizes the system; a leader generates the magic that makes everyone want to do something extra; a leader exhibits the optimism it takes for progress to occur (Slezak 1984).

Vision

In my mind, the keys to leadership are vision and inspiration. Leadership requires a vision, a sense of dissatisfaction with the status quo, a hunger to see improvement. When you have a vision, you make a mental journey from the known to the unknown, and you create the future from a montage of current facts, hopes, dreams, dangers, and opportunities (Hickman and Silva 1984). A leader continuously scans the environment noticing where change is needed. As someone has said, a successful leader is one who aims at something no one else can see and hits it.

A principal's vision might be, for instance, to provide quality education where mediocrity has become entrenched; to turn on students and faculty to working for principles of justice; or to have a living faith community within the school. Without a vision to challenge followers with, there's no possibility of a principal being a leader.

Associated with a vision has to be a plan, a way of reaching the goal. Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there. You have to know what resources are at your command in order to move the school in that direction. The story is told of Billy Graham who arrived early in his career in a little town to preach a sermon. He wanted to mail a letter, so he asked a small boy where the postoffice was. After the boy told him, Dr. Graham thanked him, and said, "If you come to the Baptist church tonight, you can hear me tell everyone how to get to heaven." "I don't think I'll be there," the boy said. "You don't even know how to get to the postoffice." You have to know where you're going and how you plan on getting there in order to

be an effective leader.

Inspiration

The second element of leadership is inspiration. If you can't get people to follow you, you're not a leader. As Maslow and others have pointed out, people do things because they have needs and desires which they want to satisfy. They act in a particular way to get some personal benefit. Sometimes these desires are short-term and relatively superficial: "I want a better classroom to work in." "I want to be able to teach without constant interruptions from the PA system." "I want an orderly and clean classroom."

Other needs are deeper and often unspoken. "I want to be happy in what I'm doing." "I want to feel that what I'm doing is worthwhile." A leader is able to get rid of sources of dissatisfaction by giving responsibility to followers, by recognizing their achievements, by and by using other satisfaction resources. In this way a leader converts needs into hopes and expectations of a better future (MacKenzie 1984).

A person who is a leader is able to balance the goals of the school with the goals of individuals, and to motivate followers so that they work to reach a common vision which elevates and transforms them into a better way of life (Burns, 1984; Levine 1985). There's an old saying that you can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink. I'd like to revise that to say that you can lead a horse to water but if you can get him to roll over and bark, then you've really done something. A good leader can inspire followers to do things which they previously would have thought impossible.

The essentials of leadership in my view, then, are vision and the ability to motivate people. In a school, the principal is the one person best able to provide that type of leadership. Building and developing the culture of a school is not easy. It is a slow process. That goes against the grain of our American society, where we expect quick fixes, solutions to every problem at the end of an hour-long TV show, and food zapped in a microwave.

I don't have any quick and sure-fire cookbook recipes for developing a school culture. I don't know if there are any. Culture building is not something that you add on to what you're already doing: it is part of the ordinary everyday life of the school (Saphier & King 1985). It requires commitment to a common philosophy and purpose, the development and rewarding of adherence and attention to the common goals, and a consistent perpetuation of the commitment and competence through hiring.

developing, and keeping the right people (Hickman and Silva 1984). I would like, however, to make the following suggestions as ways of working upon the culture of a school.

Commitment

First of all, the principal must be commited to the culture of the school. Commitment really involves a decision to "buy into" the culture. Before a teacher or student can do this, they have to know what the purpose, the central theme, of the school is. The principal obviously must know what that vision is and be able to state it succinctly so that others can know what they're buying into.

One of the best ways for a principal to show this commitment is by trying to live the dominant values of the school. Father William Byron, the president of Catholic University, calls it embodying (Byron 1980). To put it another way, a principal must be an example of the qualities which show the finest aspects of the vision he or she follows. People won't see you as a model or hear what you have to say if they don't have any contact with you. To use a phrase from Peters and Waterman, you have to manage by wandering around, MBWA, coming in contact with people, spreading the message of your vision.

Mark Twain pointed out a difference between good and poor leaders: "To do good and treat people fairly is noble. To tell others to do good and treat people fairly is also noble...and much less trouble." In other words, a good leader shows how to do something; a poor leader tells how it should be done. If we say that our students should practice Christian virtues, then we must show by our actions that we possess those virtues ourselves. Our ways of treating students and staff, the ways that we set up for administering justice, must reflect what we preach. If we are concerned about social justice, for instance, our salary scales must provide adequate compensation for those who work in our schools.

Purposing

Every act of a good leader somehow is focussed on the vision, in what Vaill calls purposing--the continuous stream of actions which bring about clarity on what you're doing, consensus on what has to be done, and commitment to the basic purposes of the organization (Vaill 1984). As St. Paul says in 2 Timothy, you must preach the good news in season and out of season. A leader never stops talking up the vision, and tying in everyday behavior to the long-range goal.

Effective principal has been compared to a chef who can subtly influence the atmosphere of a restaurant in a variety of ways--by cooking a few things with particularly appetizing aromas; by telling the waitresses what is good today, what the special of the day is; by building up a reputation for cooking a few dishes extremely well; by even being conveniently out of key ingredients for things that he can't cook successfully. He can do more than just react to the customers coming into the restaurant and instead positively trying to influence them (Finn 1983). True leadership implies that the principal is always aware of ways of influencing others to buy into the cultural norms in his or her daily actions.

Hiring

Our work of enhancing the school culture begins by hiring teachers who match up with the school's vision. This increasingly is becoming a problem, since many teaching applicants do not have the academic or experiential background of the teachers they have replaced. Assembling a good faculty has been compared to organizing a symphony orchestra; every part must blend with each other. A single bad or even indifferent teacher can damage the educational and religious ethos of the whole school, just as the tone of an orchestra can be ruined by one bad player (Finn 1984). As a modern poster puts it, "Its hard to soar with eagles when you have to work with turkeys." We can't simply hire the first person who applies, even in difficult areas such as math and science, but we have to search for people who fit our school's culture.

Development of Teachers

However, even with extensive time spent in interviewing, it's almost impossible for us to be able to hire only those who completely understand and share our vision of Catholic education. We will always find some shortcoming in every candidate. But eventually we hire the ones who seem to be the best fit to our ideal teacher.

We can't stop there. We can't be satisfied to expect them to pick up the school culture by osmosis. We have to teach it actively. We have to reinforce the commitment of teachers by emphasizing and discussing the school's purpose and goals at faculty meetings, in conferences, and in our public pronouncements. The culture of the school can be considerably strengthened if we convey the message to faculty and students that high standards have been set and are expected of them

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(Natriello 1984).

A principal has to provide methods of developing teachers into ones who see their work not just as a job but as a ministry as well. Msgr. James Fanelli, the superintendent of Hartford, Conn., has said that schools will be fully Catholic only when they have teachers who are thoroughly Catholic in mind and spirit, people of informed faith, spiritually mature, and fully grounded in the Catholic philosophy of education (1981). That doesn't happen by itself; it requires that the principal provide inservice by a program such as Vision and Values or the Jesuit Colloquium on the Educational Ministry, to help unmotivated teachers realize and accept what is expected of them as a teacher in a Catholic school. People must be committed to maintaining the school's distinctiveness, its religious and academic culture, at any cost.

Cultural High Priest

Sergiovanni says that the principal has to be a kind of cultural high priest who defines, strengthens, and articulates the enduring values and beliefs that give a school its unique identity (1984). The principal must be involved in legacy building and in creating and nurturing the saga which sets this school apart from all others. The principal must be the community story-teller, relating the myths about heroes and heroines in the past and present.

One way we have of communicating values is through the allocation we make of time, space, and funds. If we feel that community service is important in the development of students, then we will build our schedules to allow time to perform such service, and provide teachers to direct the students. Robert Muccigrosso has pointed out that the principal has to be the one who provides meaning to the symbols through which the purpose and meaning of the school are articulated. Putting it another way, the real role of the principal is to manage the values of the school.

Shared Leadership

A principal also has to learn that he or she can't do it all. The old style of one-man leadership doesn't work in this day and age. People resist having decisions thrust upon them. There is a need to share power and to involve people in decision making. People who participate in and help formulate a decision will support it, instead of fighting or ignoring it. They will work hard to make it go because it is their idea and has become

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part of their life. They have been empowered to become leaders themselves. The task of the principal is to unleash and channel the talent which exists in a faculty.

A Politician

Lastly, a principal must be a politician, in the true sense of the term. Politics is largely a matter of coalition building and negotiating with competing constituencies to reach a desired goal. The successful principal is one who understands the internal politics of the school, is able to reinforce acceptable behavior by providing rewards and incentives, and is able to lead by indirection.

Conclusion

In reviewing what I have said today, I have found that I haven't said as much as I wanted to specifically on the religious leadership of the principal. Instead my remarks have focussed more on the overall leadership which the principal is expected to demonstrate in relationship to the school culture.

The task which confronts us as Catholic high school principals is not an easy one. It is often frustrating, because we don't have any clear criteria by which to judge whether or not we have been successful.

Our goal as principals is to transform our schools from ordinary educational sites into effective faith communities which are centers of Christian culture. We must realize that this requires commitment, involvement, and the use of all the resources at our command. I believe that the creation of a strong culture is crucial to the fulfillment of our role of Christian educational leaders. What a school can become depends on what we want it to be (the vision which we have), and on our determination to reach that goal. We must work to build schools which the next generation will recognize as having merit and lasting qualities, and thus are worthy of being continued. In short, we must be leaders with a vision of what an effective Catholic school is and with the drive to inspire our school communities to reach for that vision.

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